

Indian Government and Tamil Language

**(Ancient Rivalries and Current Tug of
War)**



Thanjai Nalankilli

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(Ancient Rivalries and Current Tug of War)

by
Thanjai Nalankilli

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Preface

Tamil and Tamil Nadu are thorns in the flesh of Hindi politicians who control the Indian government.

Many of them have not forgotten that it was Tamil Nadu that stalled Hindi becoming the sole official language of India on January 26, 1965. Tamil Nadu offered 63 lives in blood sacrifice to stall Hindi imposition. The 1965 Tamil Nadu Students Anti-Hindi Imposition Agitation did not stop Hindi imposition, it stalled it and Hindi is being imposing at a slower pace now.

Sanskrit and Tamil are the two oldest languages of South Asia; which is older is a subject for debate. Only thing that stands in the way of Indian government and Sanskrit scholars declaring Sanskrit as the mother of all languages of South Asia is Tamil. Scholars inside and outside India agree that Tamil is not a child of Sanskrit. Many Hindi politicians consider Sanskrit as their own and are using Indian government machinery to degrade Tamil and upgrade Sanskrit.

There is an ongoing tug of war between Indian government and Tamil Nadu over Tamil. It is an uneven and unfair war because Hindi/Sanskrit have the power of the Indian government and Tamil does not. I am afraid my mother tongue Tamil would be stomped down under the powerful government machinery of the Indian government.

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1. Hypocrisy of Hindi Chauvinist Politicians Visiting Tamil Nadu

Inia Pandian

[First Published: August 1999; Updated: October 2015]

OUTLINE

Abbreviations

1. Say a Word in Tamil and Pause for the Thunderous Applause from Crowd
2. Indian Railways Minister Laloo Prasad Yadav Says Three Words in Tamil!
3. Indian President Pratibha Patil Praises Tamil!
4. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi Says Couple of Sentences in Tamil!
5. Closure

Abbreviations

BJP - Bharatiya Janata Party

CBSE - Central Board of Secondary Education

DMK - Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam

NCERT - National Council of Educational Research and Training

RJL - Rashtriya Janata Dal

1. Say a Word in Tamil and Pause for the Thunderous Applause from Crowd

North-Indian politicians, especially Hindi chauvinist politicians, coming to Tamil Nadu and addressing election rallies or public meetings have learned a little trick. They start their speech by saying "Vanakkam" (means "greetings" in Tamil). Their party volunteers and supporters in the crowd would immediately applaud loudly as if they have done something great for Tamil, Tamil Nadu and the Tamil people! The speaker would pause for the applause to fade out and then continue the speech in English (we have nothing against them speaking in English or their mother tongue, after all they do not know Tamil). Then they go back to New Delhi and continue to fund millions and millions of Rupees to develop Hindi (but, may be, dole out a small fraction for Tamil and other languages if they are in a "generous mood"). From New Delhi they also continue to impose Hindi through radio, television, central government approved schools, central government employment and whatever other means, in total disregard to all the opposition to Hindi imposition in Tamil Nadu.

This little, hypocritical drama is going on for years. I am fed up with it! What about you?

2. Indian Railways Minister Laloo Prasad Yadav Says Three Words in Tamil!

On November 29, 2004, Indian Minister for Railways Mr. Laloo Prasad Yadav (Lalu Prasad Yadav) was opening a Railway Call Center in Patna, and Road Transport, Highways and Shipping Minister Mr. T. R. Baalu was opening a Railway Call Centre in Bangalore. (The former is from the Hindi-belt region and belonged to the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD); latter is from Tamilnadu and belonged to the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK). RJD and DMK were partners in the ruling coalition at the Indian Central Government at that time.)

Mr. Laloo Prasad placed a telephone call from Patna to Baalu and the conversation was put on public address system in Bangalore so the crowd there could hear it. Baalu greeted the Railways Minister in English saying, "Hello, Sir". Laloo Prasad Yadav replied in Tamil saying, "Vankkam, nallaa irukkeengkalaa?" (Greetings, how are you? (or, more precisely, are you well?)). Balu answered in Tamil, "Naan nallaa irukkiraen. Neengal eppadi irukkireerkal?" (I am well. How are you?) The rest of their brief conversation continued in English because Mr. Laloo Prasad had used up the few words he memorized for this conversation, which he knew was going to be played to the public. The Tamil daily Thinathanthi reported that everyone was pleasantly surprised at Mr. Laloo Prasad Yadav's eagerness to speak in Tamil. Memorizing three words in Tamil means nothing; nothing but a little drama to entertain, may be even hoodwink, people. Let us see who this Yadav is and what his background is with respect to the official language issue.

Laloo Prasad Yadav is a Hindi chauvinist who, like most Hindi-belt politicians, wants Hindi to be the sole official language of India (in other words, everyone should learn Hindi; not a mere three words but a good working knowledge). If he is so eager about Tamil, would he end the discrimination of Tamils and other non-Hindi employees in Railways by forcing them to pass Hindi examinations? If all that takes is memorizing three words in a language, would the Railways Minister issue an order that anyone who could say three words in Hindi is deemed to be knowledgeable in Hindi and need not have to pass the required Hindi examinations. (At present those who do not pass Hindi examinations are threatened with loss of job; their annual pay increments are also withheld.). Will the Railways Minister **rescind the order to use more Hindi at Southern Railways offices** (which serves the non-Hindi speaking southern states)? [Managers at Tamil Nadu offices of Southern Railways received a memorandum titled "Important Directions Regarding Official Language Policy" in late 2003, asking them to send at least 55% of correspondence in Hindi]. What we need is tangible actions that eliminate Indian Government's discriminatory practices against non-Hindi peoples, not a Hindi minister saying three memorized Tamil words. That is nothing more than a stunt. What we want is real actions not stunts.

3. Indian President Pratibha Patil Praises Tamil!

At the invitation of the State Government of Tamil Nadu, India's President Pratibha Patil inaugurated the World Classical Tamil Conference in Coimbatore on June 23, 2010. She praised Tamil language, literature and grammar in her inaugural address and we do appreciate it. She said, "The history of the Tamils is our nation's pride." Thank you again. She further said, "The next generation of Tamils must anchor as well as equip

themselves with knowledge of Tamil culture, literature and values". Very good advice, indeed.

While we appreciate Indian government ministers and even the president of India praising Tamil and say good thing during their visits to Tamil Nadu, their actions go counter to their lip service.

3.1 Statement-1

At the very same time India's President Pratibha Patil is saying, "the history of the Tamils is our nation's pride", very few people outside Tamil Nadu, especially in north Indian states, know the history of Tamil Nadu. Indian history books prepared by Indian government agencies are centered on north Indian history with very few pages allotted to eastern or southern India. Even the Twenty Ninth All-India Conference of Dravidian Linguistics held in Thiruvananthapuram (Trivandrum), Kerala State passed a resolution in 2002 urging the Government of India to give South India its rightful and legitimate share in history books and to withdraw the new school syllabus prepared and published by the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT).

Indian government celebrated the 150th anniversary of the north-Indian Sepoy Mutiny of 1857 calling it India's First War of Independence, although south-India's Vellore Mutiny of 1806 precedes the Sepoy Mutiny by over half a century. Every student in the south had heard about north-India's Sepoy Mutiny but very few in the north have heard about Vellore Mutiny because it is not in history books prepared under Indian government agencies. In September 2010, Indian Government Ministry of Culture announced grants of Rupees 2 crore (20 million) each for research on 12 freedom fighters from north-Indian Sepoy Mutiny but no money to do research on south-Indian Vellore Mutiny or Tamil Nadu's Maruthu Pandiyars who rose against British rule. So Indian President Pratiba Patil saying, "the history of the Tamils is our nation's pride" is well and good but put your money where your mouth is. Provide adequate coverage of the history of South and Northeast India in NCERT history books.

3.2 Statement-2

"The next generation of Tamils must anchor as well as equip themselves with knowledge of Tamil culture, literature and values", said President Pratibha Patil. Again, the Indian government is not doing anything to encourage it. Indian Government's Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) is opening schools in Tamilnadu where you can graduate without studying Tamil Nadu history or culture. Indian government would not allow Tamil as court language in Tamil Nadu's High Court (Madras High Court) in spite of repeated requests. Indian Government owned Air India refuses to make in-flight announcements in Tamil for flight starting or ending in Tamil Nadu or even for flights within Tamil Nadu. Drug companies (pharmaceutical companies) are ordered to include Hindi in drug labels but no Tamil. Indian government is making Tamil more and more useless in Tamilnadu. While we greatly appreciate President Pratibha Patil's advice to the

next generation of Tamils to learn Tamil culture, literature and values, Indian government's actions are counterproductive in this regard.

4. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi Says Couple of Sentences in Tamil!

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who belongs to the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), visited Tamil Nadu State in August 2015. He started his speech at the launch of the National Handloom Day in Tamil Nadu in August 2015 with a couple of sentences in Tamil (written by someone else). The crowd applauded (The Hindu; August 8, 2015) as if he did something great for Tamil language. This friendly face towards Tamil disappeared just the next month during the Teachers Day Celebration; his true colours as a Hindi chauvinist showed. That colour is unveiled in some detail in Chapter 3.

5. Closure

Tamil and India politics: North-Indian politicians' this little, hypocritical drama is going on for years, be it the Indian president, prime minister, minister or a powerful politician. We have provided enough examples covering senior Hindi politicians from different political parties period spanning well over a decade.

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2.

Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh Praises Tamil and Makes Empty Promises

Thanjai Nalankilli

[First Published: March 2006; Updated: January 2017]

[Although this article discusses Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's (Congress Party) hypocrisy on Hindi-Tamil, other Indian prime ministers and Hindi politicians, from across the political parties, have displayed such hypocrisy on the language issue.]

Speaking at a function in Neyveli, Tamilnadu, on February 4, 2006, Indian Prime Minister Manmohan S [ingh (Congress Pary) said, "Indian Government is committed to the full development of this great language of a great people."

Oh, what applause he received from the audience! Let us look a little deeper. Is Indian government helping the development of Tamil into a twenty first century language or is it putting roadblocks on the way? Here are two examples from engineering education and law practice.

1)

At considerable expenses of its own, the Tamil Nadu State Government developed the necessary textbooks for teaching engineering at the undergraduate level in Tamil Nadu colleges. It was to be totally optional. Only those who want to study will be admitted to Tamil-medium engineering classes. Others would continue to study in English medium. The Tamil medium courses were to be introduced in 1997 but the All India Council on Engineering (AICE) created by the Indian government refused to give permission. AICE said that it wants to wait until other states also develop engineering programs in their mother languages. Why should Tamil people wait to learn engineering in their mother tongue because some other states have not spent the necessary monies and resources to write textbooks and train professors in their mother tongues?

Another "puzzling question" is, at the very same time AICE refused permission for Tamil-medium engineering education as a voluntary option, Indian government pressures its Hindi and non-Hindi engineering and scientific employees in government undertakings such as the Atomic Research Centers and Oil and Gas Commission to make notes in Hindi and encourages them to publish scientific papers in Hindi. Also, Indian Government was giving **financial grants to write engineering and scientific books in Hindi**. It is a double standard: hold down all other languages but develop Hindi using tax monies of Hindi and non-Hindi speakers. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's speech that Indian government is committed to the full development of Tamil is nothing but empty words.

UPDATE: After 13 years from the original request and after considerable and persistent effort of the Tamil Nadu government, Tamil was introduced as an optional medium of instruction in some of the engineering colleges in Tamil Nadu in 2010. Tamil Nadu state government funded the writing and publication of Tamil engineering books with no assistance from Indian government. At the same time Indian government used Tamil as well as other non-Hindi peoples' taxes to write engineering books in Hindi.

2)

Second example. Tamil leaders have been asking the Indian Government to allow the use of Tamil at the Madras High Court. At considerable expense, Tamil Nadu State Government had developed legal terminologies in Tamil and published law books in Tamil. Many Tamil lawyers are eager to use Tamil at the High Court. **Indian government refuses to permit Tamil in the Madras High Court in spite of requests for many years.** But Hindi-speaking states of Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh are permitted to use Hindi in their High Courts. Is it not double standard? (By the way, Tamil Nadu spent its own money to develop legal terminologies and textbooks in Tamil. In contrast, it is the Indian government that funds Hindi development; that is, more than three-quarter of the funds for Hindi development come from non-Hindi speakers.)

Indian Government that is dominated by Hindi politicians holds down the development of other languages but spends taxpayer monies lavishly on Hindi. After Hindi is established sufficiently as a scientific and legal language, Indian government would then permit Tamil to be used in engineering colleges and high court. **So Tamil and other languages would always lag behind Hindi in spite of their antiquity and richness.** This is the Indian government tactic.

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3.

Hindi-Tamil Hypocrisy of Prime Minister Narendra Modi

Inia Pandian

[First Published: October 2015]

OUTLINE

1. National Handloom Day Speech
2. The Two Faces of Prime Minister Modi (Teachers Day Celebration)
3. Examples of Removing Tamil from Indian Government Offices in Tamil Nadu
4. Continuing the Policy of the Previous Governments in Keeping Out Tamil from Indian Government Offices in Tamil Nadu

[Although this article discusses Prime Minister Narendra Modi's (Bharatiya Janata Party - BJP) hypocrisy on Hindi-Tamil, other Indian prime ministers and Hindi politicians, from across the political parties, have also displayed such hypocrisy on the language issue.]

1. National Handloom Day Speech

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Tamil Nadu State in August 2015. He started his speech at the launch of the National Handloom Day with with a couple of sentences in Tamil (obviously written by someone else). The crowd applauded (The Hindu; August 8, 2015) as if he did something great for Tamil language. If only the crowd knew of the full extent of what his Indian government is doing to keep Tamil language out of Indian government offices. activities and operations in Tamil Nadu, they might have booed him.

2. The Two Faces of Prime Minister Modi (Teachers Day Celebration)

Prime Minister Modi spoke to students all over India on 2015 Teachers Day via a telecast available to all schools. He spoke in Hindi with no translation to state languages or even English. Most students in Tamil Nadu did not understand the Hindi speech. Some schools did not even bother to turn on the television because the speech was in Hindi (Times of India; September 5, 2015). Narendra Modi also had a televised interaction with a few students selected by his office on the Teachers Day. This was also telecast to all schools across India. K. Visalini from Tamil Nadu asked him a question in English and he answered her in Hindi (although he can and had talked in English many times) with no English or other non-Hindi translation. (Deccan Chronicle; September 6, 2015) Mr. Modi's actions during these Teachers Day events show his true colours as a Hindi supremacist. His fake respect for Tamil at the National Handloom Day just the previous month does not fool most Tamil people.

3. Examples of Removing Tamil from Indian Government Offices in Tamil Nadu

State Bank of India deposit slips in Tamil Nadu were in English and Tamil before Mr. Modi became the Prime Minister of India. After he became the prime minister, it was changed to English and Hindi. Mr. Modi, don't pretend to respect Tamil by speaking a few sentences in Tamil when you are here, put back Tamil in bank deposit slips. Do you know how many people of Tamilnadu have to seek help from a third person to fill out these slips because they know only Tamil? Or, are you in some fantasy land where everyone knows Hindi or English? Something atrocious is happening after Mr. Narendra Modi became Prime Minister. Indian government is putting up boards and banners here and there in Tamil Nadu where complete Hindi sentences are written in Tamil script (letters). This is an insult to Tamil language and Tamil people. This is polluting Tamil with Hindi. This is like creating a mixed-breed language of Tamindi. Mr. Modi, remove these boards and banners immediately. You are spitting on the faces of Tamil people with these banners and boards.

4. Continuing the Policy of the Previous Governments in Keeping Out Tamil from Indian Government Offices in Tamil Nadu

To be fair to Prime Minister Modi, he was not the first to keep out Tamil from Indian government offices in Tamil Nadu. Previous Congress and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) governments had also used only English and Hindi instructions, tickets, warnings, etc. in Tamil Nadu. Here are a few examples (not a complete list). No Tamil in most Indian government run bank Automatic Teller Machines (ATM). No Tamil in most computer generated railway tickets (train tickets). No Tamil warnings in cooking gas cylinders. No Tamil in most railway reservation lists posted in Tamilnadu train stations. No Tamil on instruction boards put in trains running within Tamil Nadu.

Prime Minister Modi, first put back Tamil your government removed from Indian government offices. Then reverse what the previous governments did and give Tamil its due place in Indian government offices within Tamil Nadu Then, Mr. Modi, the entire Tamil Nadu will applaud you.

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4. Indian Government Denigrates the Tamil Language

Thanjai Nalankilli

[First Published: June 2001; Updated: February 2005]

OUTLINE

1. Introduction
2. It is a Politician's Statement, not a Scholar's Statement
3. Ulterior Motive
4. Indian Government, Sanskrit and Tamil
5. Concluding Remarks

Abbreviation

AICE - All India Council on Engineering

1. Introduction

In April 2000, India's Human Resource Development Minister, Dr. Murli Manohar Joshi, said that, "there are two forms of Tamil, namely, ancient Tamil and modern Tamil". This is an absolutely wrong statement. There is no ancient Tamil and modern Tamil; there is only one Tamil. The oldest available Tamil literature is Tholkappiam, written over 2000 years ago. It is understandable today by anyone with a good knowledge of Tamil. We use the same grammar used in Tholkappiam. We use the same words used in Tholkappiam. The Tamil language used in Tholkappiam is in use today in business, literature, education, entertainment and everyday life. Other old books written approximately 20 centuries ago are Thirukural, Purannanooru, Silappathikaram, etc. belonging to the Third Tamil Academy (Third Tamil Sangam or Third Tamil Kazhagam). We use today the same grammar and words used in these ancient classics. The same Tamil language has been in **continual use** for at least 2000 years in every sphere of life of the Tamil people. (Age of the Tamil language is undetermined except that the oldest available literature, Tholkappiam, is more than 2000 years old. This book refers to even older literature, thus Tamil is much older than 2000 years).

So Indian Government Minister Joshi's statement that there are two forms of Tamil -- the ancient Tamil and the modern Tamil -- is wrong, baseless and mischievous. It should be noted that the Indian Government Minister's statement was made in the context of whether the Indian Government should declare Tamil a classical language. The minister was expressing the view that today's Tamil is not a classical language but, may be, another Tamil -- "the ancient Tamil" -- is a classical language. This a very calculated and cunning anti-Tamil view, as we would discuss later in this article.

2. It is a Politician's Statement, not a Scholar's Statement

To my knowledge, no Tamil scholar or linguist from anywhere, at anytime has stated that there are two forms of Tamil, namely, ancient Tamil and modern Tamil. Who is the Murli Manohar Joshi to make such a statement about the Tamil language? Is he a linguist or a Tamil scholar who reached this conclusion on the basis of scholarly research? No. He is neither a linguist nor a Tamil scholar. In fact, **he does not know Tamil** at all! He cannot speak Tamil, he cannot read Tamil, he cannot write Tamil, he does not understand Tamil. Then what gave him the authority to make a statement that there are two forms of Tamil: the ancient Tamil and the modern Tamil? He is Indian Government's Human Resource Development Minister with the power to change school and university curricula, fund monies for language research and development, fund the publication of books, etc. etc. Just because the Tamil speaking land of Tamil Nadu is under Indian Government rule, it does not give him the right to make profound statements about the Tamil language. Only Tamil scholars and linguists have the right to make such statements. Their mother tongue need not be Tamil. They can be from any country but must know Tamil literature, grammar and history. There are excellent Tamil scholars and linguists around the world; they may make statements about Tamil. But this Murli Manohar Joshi, who does not know Tamil at all, has no right to make statements about Tamil even if he is a minister in the Indian Government and the Tamil speaking land of Tamil Nadu is under Indian Government rule.

3. Ulterior Motive

This statement about Tamil is not just a passing remark by an arrogant Indian Minister. **This is part of a calculated effort by the Indian Government to denigrate the Tamil language.** Let me explain.

Ever since a small group of Aryans migrated into South Asia some 3 to 4 thousand years ago, they have set themselves as superior to the local people (Dravidians, Nagas, etc.) They called their language the "divine language" (devabasha) and their script the "divine script" (Devanagari). Aryans declared that Sanskrit is the only language that gods understand and all worship should be in Sanskrit. The small group of the migrant Aryans gained favor with many local kings and engineered Sanskrit to become the language of governance in many kingdoms in northern India. In due course leaders like Buddha opposed this Sanskrit supremacy. Eventually Sanskrit lost its place in governance but continued in Hindu religious rituals. Years passed; centuries passed.

In the 19th and 20th centuries Sanskrit supremacists, who consider themselves Aryans, spread the theory around the world that Sanskrit is the mother of all Indian (South Asian) languages. Their concentration in high level positions in the Indian bureaucracy, media and education system made it easier for them to preach and spread the Sanskrit supremacy theory. However Rev. Caldwell established that Dravidian languages, with Tamil as the elder sister, is of a different family than Sanskrit. Tamil owes nothing to Sanskrit for its existence. Even if every Sanskrit word mixed in Tamil speech and writing over the years (in the same way as English words are being mixed in recent years) is removed from Tamil usage, Tamil will still be a vibrant language.

A major fortune fell on the pro-Sanskrit lobby in 1947. Britain relinquished its colonial rule over South Asia. The new democratic Indian Government is dominated and controlled by Hindi politicians because they form the largest group in the Indian parliament. Right or wrong, much of the Hindi people consider themselves Aryans and consider Sanskrit is their ancestral language.

The only thing that stands in the way of establishing Sanskrit as the unchallenged supreme language of South Asia is Tamil. As we noted before, Rev. Caldwell has established that Dravidian languages are of a different family and that Tamil, amongst them, does not owe anything to Sanskrit for its existence. It is a vibrant living language even if every Sanskrit word mixed in it over the years are removed. Though Sanskrit supremacists' theory that Sanskrit is the oldest South Asian language is spread around the world and even accepted almost universally, there is a school of thought, with substantial evidence to support it, that Tamil is older than Sanskrit (see "Primary Classical Language of the World", book by G. Devaneyan) (Devaneyan is also known as Devaneya Paavanar). Also, thousands of Tamil words considered until a few decades ago as Sanskrit in origin are now proven to be Tamil in origin. It is also now proven that flow of words is not one way from Sanskrit to Tamil but there are thousands of Sanskrit words of Tamil origin. (See G. Devaneyan's Tamil books "Tamil Varalaru", "Vadamoli Varalaru", "Chollaraichi Katturaikal", etc.) Other authors like Perunchiththiranaar (also known as Pavalareru) and Aruli, among others, have published dozens of articles establishing this. Thus Tamil has become a thorn on the side of the Indian Government intent on establishing Sanskrit as the supreme language of India. Indian Government Minister Joshi's statement is part of a dual campaign of elevating Sanskrit and denigrating Tamil.

4. Indian Government, Sanskrit and Tamil

While the full power, prestige and purse of the Indian Government is used to promote Sanskrit and Hindi, all other languages are ignored; special attention is now being made to suppress the rich heritage and history of Tamil because Tamil could challenge the antiquity and supremacy of Sanskrit.

The Indian Government declared 1999-2000 as the "Year of Sanskrit", starting from March 18, 1999. Huge amounts of tax-payer monies were spent to popularize Sanskrit and spread the message of the richness of Sanskrit among the general public. Government funds were allocated for programs which would, according to the Indian Government, "lead to long-term and permanent development of Sanskrit". Sanskrit academies were set up in every state, even in states like Tamil Nadu, Assam, Manipur, Nagaland and Tripura whose languages have nothing to do with Sanskrit. Every state government was asked to set up committees to celebrate the "Year of Sanskrit" (There is much more but these are representative activities of the Indian Government to glorify Sanskrit.)

Seeing these "Year of Sanskrit" programs, the Tamil Nadu State Government and some political parties in Tamil Nadu asked the Indian Government to declare Year 2000 as the "Year of Tamil". The Indian Government refused. We also want to point out here that, since 1947, the Indian Government has spent more money on Sanskrit than on all other

languages combined, with the exception of Hindi. But Sanskrit is a dead language and less than 0.01% of the Indian population know even a little Sanskrit (yes, you read it right; it is less than 0.01%).

Tamil Nadu State Government and some political parties from Tamil Nadu asked the Indian Government to declare Tamil a classical language (Indian Government had declared Sanskrit a classical language soon after the British left India and Hindi politicians got control of the Indian Government). Indian Government said that it had to set up a committee to decide if Tamil is a classical language. We have no problem with the Indian Government setting up a committee of expert scholars to decide if Tamil is a classical language or not. These scholars should have no political affiliations or in the employment of the Indian Government or the Tamil Nadu State Government. We would prefer that at least some members be internationally renowned language scholars from outside of India and whose mother tongue is not Tamil. The committee should be established immediately and asked to submit a report within one year. Committee's recommendation should be binding on the Indian Government. That is, if the committee concludes that Tamil is not a classical language, Indian Government should not declare Tamil a classical language; if the committee concludes that Tamil is a classical language, Indian Government should declare Tamil a classical language within six months. The situation is that the Indian Government is not setting up such a committee but simply procrastinating. Indian Government made a decision to produce nuclear bombs in far less time than in even setting up a committee to study if Tamil should be declared a classical language.

Thiruvalluvar, author of the approximately 2000 year old Tamil classic Thirukural, is hailed as one of the greatest poets by scholars around the world. Thirukural is translated into many dozens of languages. Philosophers of the caliber of Albert Schweitzer have lavished praise on it. On January 1, 2000, the Tamil Nadu Government unveiled a 133 feet high statue of Poet Thiruvalluvar in Kanyakumari. There was a gala celebration to mark the occasion (all expenses for the statue and the celebrations were paid by the Tamil Nadu State Government with no contribution from the Indian Government). Tamil Nadu Government requested the Indian Government to broadcast the celebration on television (all broadcast television in India is controlled by the Indian Government; all private television is cablecast and are thus less widely available; available mostly in urban areas to those who can afford to pay for it). The Indian Government refused. This same government is broadcasting programs in Sanskrit every day throughout the country to over a billion people (over 1,000,000,000 people) while less than 50,000 people know the language, even a little (according to 1991 census). But it refused to allocate just half an hour once in a lifetime to celebrate this world renowned Tamil poet. Why? The Indian Government does not want people outside of Tamil Nadu to know about the richness of Tamil language, literature and culture; they do not want any competition to Sanskrit. These are the same people who said that one of the aims of having a year of celebration for Sanskrit at taxpayer expense was to make people aware of the rich heritage of Sanskrit, but they want to cover up the richness of Tamil culture with a blackout.

Though there are many more, I will give just one more example of how the Indian Government goes about its dual strategy of elevating/popularizing Sanskrit and at the same time covering up the richness of Tamil and putting roadblocks to Tamil development into the 21st century. In 1998, Tamil Nadu State Government sought permission from All India Council on Engineering (AICE), set up by the Indian Government, to introduce Tamil as an optional medium of instruction in a few selected engineering colleges in Tamil Nadu. Only those students who opt for Tamil medium would be taught in Tamil, others would be in English medium classes. All the necessary books and class materials had been prepared with great effort and everything was in place, But AICE refused permission although it could not find any deficiency in books, course curricula or qualified professors. While the Indian Government would not permit optional Tamil medium instruction at engineering colleges in Tamil Nadu, scientists and engineers at Indian Government operated Atomic Energy establishments and Oil and Gas Commission are encouraged to make notes in Hindi and it would affect their pay-raises. There is more. In recent months (early 2001) some Indian Government Ministers are urging scientists to learn Sanskrit because, according to them, it has much to offer in science. A Sanskrit Department is being set up at one of the premier technological institutes offering post-graduate degrees in science and engineering, the Indian Institute of Technology at New Delhi; this institute is operated by the Indian Government. But, alas, Tamil could not be used as an optional medium of instruction for under-graduate engineering education in Tamil Nadu for Tamil students who want to study in Tamil.

5. Concluding Remarks

It is within the context of Indian Government attempts to prop up Sanskrit as the supreme language and at the same time cover up the rich heritage of Tamil and block its development into new fields of science and technology should one view India's Human Resource Minister Murli Manohar Joshi's statement that there are two forms of Tamil, namely, ancient Tamil and modern Tamil. As we noted before, (1) Sanskrit is widely accepted as the oldest language of South Asia (with a minority descending view that Tamil is older) and (2) Tamil is universally accepted as the oldest living language of South Asia. This credit to Tamil of being the oldest living language of South Asia bothers the Indian Government. Thus the minister's statement. The corollary of Joshi's statement is that "ancient Tamil" is dead and what lives to day is a different "modern Tamil"; thus Tamil is not the oldest living language of South Asia. See the **cunning, "clever" strategy** of the Indian Government.

At the very same time, the Indian Government (including Minister Joshi) is propagating the false theory that Sanskrit is not a dead language but is alive. They spend taxpayer monies to arrange Sanskrit Conferences, etc. etc. (We have no problem with someone arranging conferences or conducting research but we do not want exorbitant amounts of our tax monies spent on it).

Unfortunately, at this time in history, Hindi politicians who consider themselves the descendents of Aryans, have the power and purse string to do what they want. They are bent not only on propagating Sanskrit at great tax payer expense but also on doing

everything in their considerable power at the Indian Government to hold down and denigrate Tamil. In the decades to come, under the Hindi-politicians' rule of India, **Tamil will come under extreme pressure from Hindi imposition on one side and covert anti-Tamil activities on yet another side.**

In order for Tamil to keep its rich heritage and grow into the new frontiers of science, engineering, computer technology and more, Tamil has to free itself from the Indian Government stranglehold.

UPDATE (February 2005)

Indian government declared Tamil as a classical language in 2004. The political deal makings that went on between some Tamil-centric parties and the Congress Party are discussed in Chapter 5. Indian government's step-motherly treatment and neglect/discrimination of Tamil compared to another classical language Sanskrit even after the declaration are also discussed in some detail in that chapter.

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5. India and Tamil Nadu: Politics of Classical Languages

Thanjai Nalankilli

[First Published: November 2017]

OUTLINE

1. Introduction
2. Political Deal Making
3. Five More Classical Languages Declared
4. Favouritism to Sanskrit and Negligence of the Other Five
5. Are We All children of Mother India or Not?

ABBREVIATIONS

CBSE - Central Board of Secondary Education
DMK - Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam
MDMK - Marumalarchi Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam
PMK - Pattali makkal Katchi
UPA - United Progressive Alliance
USA - United States of America

1. Introduction

Language issues and politics have been intertwined for a long time in India. Usually it revolves around India's official language policy and the associated Hindi imposition on non-Hindi Indians. There was another issue, of much lesser interest to common people -- the issue of classical languages. Centre of action was Tamil Nadu, the land of Tamil, one of the oldest languages of the world and a legitimate contestant with Sanskrit for the title "oldest language of South Asia". There is one important fact: Tamil is a living language, Sanskrit is not.

2. Political Deal Making

Tamil scholars have been asking Indian government to declare Tamil a classical language for many years. The request got more vocal in early 2000s. Prior to the 2004 Indian parliamentary election, the then opposition party, the Congress Party, formed the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) that included DMK, PMK and MDMK from Tamil Nadu. At the request (or insistence) of these Tamil parties, the alliance promised the following if it were to win the election: "The UPA Government will set up a committee to examine the question of declaring all languages in the Eight Schedule of the Constitution as official languages. In addition, Tamil will be declared as a classical language." (The Hindu; May 28, 2004).

The Alliance won a majority in the election and formed the Indian government. It ignored (did not carry out) the first promise to set up a committee to examine the question of declaring all languages in the Eight Schedule of the Constitution as official languages.

But the UPA government did declare Tamil a classical language later in the year (2004). In the opinion of this writer, this declaration is on the basis of political necessities and not on linguistic considerations. I am not saying Tamil is not a classical language; it is a classical language [Reference 1]. But Indian government declared Tamil a classical language because of political necessities. In my opinion, UPA government would not have declared Tamil a classical language in 2004 but for its need to get the support of DMK, MDMK and PMK.

I thank the Indian government for declaring Tamil a classical language. My criticism is, "why is Sanskrit (another language that India declared classical) is getting more 25 times monies for development and promotion than Tamil? Is it not step-motherly treatment?" This matter is discussed in some detail in Section 4.

3. Five More Classical Languages Declared

Once Indian government's decision to declare Tamil a classical language was announced, some of the other Indian languages also asked Indian government for classical language status. Indian government declared Sanskrit (2005), Kannada (2008), Telugu (2008), Malayalam (2013) and Odia (2014) as classical languages in the years noted within parenthesis.

4. Favouritism to Sanskrit and Negligence of the Other Five

4.1 Step Motherly Treatment of Kannada, Malayalam, Odia, Tamil and Telugu

Although Indian government has declared 6 classical languages, it does not treat them equally. Amount of taxpayer money spent on Sanskrit is more than twenty-fold that of monies spent on all other 5 classical languages combined. It is like **Mother India's (Bharat Matha's) daughter Sanskrit having a sumptuous feast at the dinner table and the five step-daughters getting scraps of food dropping from the table**. This situation should change. All classical languages should receive the same amount of money from Indian government.

Indian government's perks and privileges were for Sanskrit only. Other five classical languages are ignored. Here are a few examples (this is not a complete list).

4.2 Sanskrit Conferences and Colleges

Indian Government spends large sums of monies to hold Sanskrit Conference within and outside India. Sanskrit Universities are established using Indian government funds. Very little funding is allocated for the other 5 classical languages. We want each of the 6 classical languages get the same amount of money from Indian government to organize

conferences and fully fund dedicated universities. Not some scrap from the dinner table, each language should get the same amount of money from Indian government.

4.3 Central Advisory Boards

Indian government has set up a Central Sanskrit Board, an advisory body for the development and propagation of Sanskrit. How about such Boards for the other 5 classical languages? Why develop and propagate Sanskrit only?

4.4 CBSE Schools

Indian Government controlled CBSE schools celebrate "Sanskrit Week" every year. What about weeks for the other 5 classical languages? A more practical way is to celebrate "Classical Languages Week" giving EQUAL importance to all 6 classical languages. Or, rotate it every 6 years: For example, first year Kannada, second year Malayalam, then Odia, Sanskrit, Tamil and sixth year Telugu. Then again go back to Kannada, Malayalam, ...

Human Resources and Development (HRD) Minister Smriti Irani said in 2016 that Sanskrit would be made available as a third language in all CBSE schools (Zee News website; February 23, 2016). Why just Sanskrit? Make all 6 classical languages available in all CBSE schools. Or, allocate each of the classical language a few states. For example, Telugu is available in all CBSE schools in Uttar Pradesh and Gujarat; Malayalam in West Bengal, Tripura and Maharashtra, Sanskrit in Kerala, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu, etc. That is fair, that is just, that is equal treatment.

CBSE affiliation byelaws state that Hindi or Sanskrit must be taught as one of the languages in all states (The Hindu; July 28, 2015). It is not fair to the other languages. Revise the byelaws that Hindi or one of the 6 classical languages must be taught as one of the languages in all states. That is fair, that is just, that is equal treatment.

In summary, CBSE schools must spend the same amount of money equally on all 6 classical languages. No favouritism towards Sanskrit. **If you cannot or do not want to spend money on the other 5 classical languages, do not spend any money to promote Sanskrit in CBSE schools.**

5. Are We All children of Mother India or Not?

We have given several examples, although not a complete list, of how Sanskrit is getting so much attention and monies from Indian government. **All that the other 5 languages got was a piece of paper declaring them to be classical languages and very little money.** That is not acceptable.

My position is that all Indian languages, not to just the 6 classical languages, should get equal treatment from the Indian government. We cannot accept Hindi and Sanskrit as

Mother India's (Bharat Mata's) daughters and other languages as orphans without a parent. Are we all children of Mother India or not?

Reference

1. Statement on the Status of Tamil as a Classical Language (by George L. Hart), University of California at Berkeley, April 2000. [<https://web.archive.org/web/20100308114310/http://tamil.berkeley.edu/Tamil%20Chair/TamilClassicalLanguage/TamilClassicalLgeLtr.html>]

Author of this document, Professor George L. Hart, is well qualified to assess if Tamil qualifies as a classical language. He obtained his doctoral degree in the area of Sanskrit from the internationally acclaimed Harvard University, Cambridge, USA in 1971. He also studied Tamil. He knows Latin and Greek, both classical languages, and French, German and Russian. He taught Sanskrit at University of Wisconsin, Madison, USA before moving to University of California, Berkeley, USA. There he taught Tamil in the Department of South and Southeast Asian Studies. He has authored several books on Tamil and Sanskrit. He is not a Tamil.

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6. How the Indian Government Stabbed Myanmar (Burma) Tamils in the Back

Thanjai Nalankilli

[First Published: July 2002]

Tens of thousands of Tamil people from Tamil Nadu went to work in Burma during the British colonial rule. (Burma was renamed Myanmar in 1990 and is currently known by that name.) Their children, children's children and succeeding generations continued to live there. There were also Telugu and Hindi speaking workers who migrated to Burma from British India.

Burmese Tamils (Myanmar Tamils) had their own Tamil language magazines for local and Tamil Nadu news, schools for teaching Tamil, and movie theaters for screening Tamil movies imported from India. Telugu and Hindi speakers also had similar institutions and facilities.

Things were going smoothly for these people even after the British left and independence dawned on Burma in 1948. Then there was a military coup in 1962. The "immigrant population", although many had been living there for generations and have integrated with the Burmese society, became a target for discrimination and oppression by the new government.

The then Myanmar Government (Burmese Government) closed down the Tamil, Telugu and Hindi magazines. Tamil, Telugu and Hindi schools were also closed except for some that were operated from temples and houses. Movie theaters showing Tamil, Telugu and Hindi movies were not closed but the Myanmar Government placed a restriction that movies in only one language could be imported from India, be it Tamil, Telugu, Hindi or whatever. The Myanmar Government asked the Indian Government to choose the language. Since the Tamil population in Myanmar was larger, Tamil movies were being imported in larger numbers than Telugu or Hindi movies, and Tamil movies were shown in more theaters and attracted more audience than Telugu and Hindi movies, people thought that the Indian Government would decide to export Tamil movies. That would have been the rational, unbiased decision. But that did not happen. Hindi politicians who dominate and control the Indian Government chose to export only Hindi movies to Burma (Myanmar). It was a great blow to the large Tamil population there. The Indian Government betrayed the Tamils. It stabbed the Burmese Tamils in the back.

At a time when the Tamil people were being oppressed by the then Burmese Government, Hindi politicians who control the Indian Government took the opportunity to impose Hindi on them. **It was a clear attempt to destroy the identity and culture of Burmese Tamils, and Hindi-fy them.** Indian Government's hope was that, now on, the children and future generations of Burmese Tamils would adopt the Hindi culture and language (seen and heard in Hindi movies) and lose their Tamil identity (with no or very

little access to Tamil culture and language through movies or magazines or schools). This is part of the overall plan to destroy the Tamil identity and culture everywhere Tamil people live. This is part of Indian government effort to Hindi-fy all people from India wherever they live.

Overseas Tamils everywhere should be vigilant to protect their Tamil identity and not drowned in a Hindi-fied Indian identity.

(NOTE: The Burmese Tamil situation we discussed above pertains to the 1960s and 70s. Their situation has changed for the better in recent years with new governments. As for India, its negative policies towards Tamil people inside and outside India have not changed.)

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7.

Hindi-Tamil Discrimination by Indian High Commission (Embassy) in South Africa

Thanjai Nalankilli

[First Published: November 2015]

[Indian government provides free space to hold Hindi classes at the Indian consular office in Durban (South Africa) but refuses to do so for Tamil classes even though Tamils are the largest language group among South Africans of Indian origin.]

OUTLINE

1. Background
2. Indian Government and Indian Languages
3. Hindi Imperialism Started from 1947
4. Crores of Rupees Spent on Hindi Propagation Abroad
5. Final Words

1. Background

There are over a million South Africans of Indian origin. Majority of them are descendents of migrants from Tamil-speaking Tamil Nadu, South India. According to <http://www.indiainsouthafrica.com> (seen on October 12, 2015): "The number is about 1.15 million (about 2.5% of South Africa's total population). Approximately 80% of the Indian community lives in the Province of KwaZulu-Natal. According to the Department of Education and Culture, the linguistic break-up of the Indian community in that province is: Tamil 51%, Hindi 30%, Gujarati 7%, Telugu 6%, Urdu 5% and others 1%. Clearly the largest linguistic group among Indian-origin South Africans is Tamils and then Hindis.

Yet the Indian Government, which is dominated by Hindi politicians because Hindi is the largest linguistic group in India, offers free Hindi classes in South Africa and not any other language. South African Tamils asked the Indian High Commission (similar to embassy) in Durban to provide free Tamil classes also; Indian consular officers there refused saying free classes would be offered only for Hindi, and Tamil classes need to be charged a fee. In fact, Indian government is going back from its announcement in 2008 that Tamil classes would be offered free (Times of India; January 29, 2008). Indian consular office did offer free space to hold Tamil classes until June 2014. Then it started charging for the use of the space while Hindi classes were not asked to pay a fee. A Tamil delegation consisting of Mr Karthi Moothsamy (President, South African Tamil Federation), Mr Micky Chetty (the President of the International Movement for Tamil Culture in South Africa/Africa), Mr Richard Govender (President, KwaZulu-Natal region of the Tamil Federation), Ms Mala Lutchmanan (Tamil teacher and scholar) and Mrs

Mallie Pillay (Tamil scholar) met with Indian consular officers in March 2015 and the talks failed to achieve free space for Tamil classes.

Eighty six year old Swaminathan Gounden was a stalwart against apartheid; he was under house-arrest for more than 10 years during the days of apartheid . He said, "We struggled all our lives to overcome racial discrimination but now we are being discriminated along language lines by those representing India here" (The Subry Govender Column, Blogspot; March 26, 2015; Subry Govender, a journalist for over 40 years, is a Foreign Correspondent for Radio Deutsche Welle).

2. Indian Government and Indian Languages

I have published a few dozen articles on Indian government's Hindi imposition policy within India. I had explained with examples that the intent of the Indian government is to slowly make all other living Indian languages useless in day-to-day life and elevate Hindi as the only useful language [Reference 1].

Indian government is implementing its language discrimination policies not only within India but also in foreign countries. It uses every chance it gets to weaken and eventually kill off language and cultural activities of non-Hindi peoples of Indian origin in foreign countries, and pushes Hindi on to them as best it could; the ultimate goal is to Hindi-fy Indian communities abroad.

3. Hindi Imperialism Started from 1947

Imperial Hindi policies did not start today. It started from the day the British left India and power changed to Hindi politicians in 1947. Read the language debates at the Constitution Assembly in the late 1940s. Some of the arrogant statements by Hindi chauvinists are repulsing. Here is an extreme example. "People who do not know Hindustani have no right to stay in India. People who are present in this House to fashion a Constitution for India and do not know Hindustani are not worthy to be members of this Assembly. They had better leave." - R.V. Dhulekar (speaking at the Indian Constitutional assembly on December 10, 1946) [Constitution Assembly Debates-Official Report, Volume 1 (p 26-27), Lok Sabha Secretariat, 1988]

4. Crores of Rupees Spent on Hindi Propagation Abroad

(1 crore = 10 million)

Money is not the reason for Indian consulate asking a fee to use a few hundred square metres of space a few days a month to teach Tamil at the consulate building where Hindi is taught free. Why not ask a fee for Hindi too? Money is spent lavishly to propagate Hindi around the world. Here are a few examples.

India established a Hindi Chair in 2010 at the Yerevan State Linguistic University (YSLU) in Armenia; that is, India will pay the salary of a Hindi professor at the university for ever. Indian government funds a Hindi Professor position at the University

of Ljubljana in Slovenia since 2011. Salary of one professor that India pays is more a thousand times the cost of providing free space for Tamil classes at the consular office in Durban. Indian government has been providing similar funding for professor positions and scholarships in a number of other foreign universities as well. To the best of my knowledge, Indian government is not paying the salary of any professor of Tamil anywhere in the world. Tamil people living in America held fund-raising to pay the salary of a professor at the University of California in Berkeley and currently raising funds to pay the salary of a Tamil professor at Harvard University; both universities are in America. Indian government did not help with these efforts. At about the same time, Indian government promised all help to establish a Hindi Centre near New York (America) that will serve as an academic and cultural hub and facilitate exchange programs between Indian and American universities. The center will serve as a vibrant hub of academic and cultural activities focused on promoting Hindi as a world language (The New Indian Express; April 12, 2015). See Chapter 5 of this book to find more examples of how the Indian government is spending money to teach and promote Hindi abroad.

5. Final Words

It is evident that Indian government will not help the preservation of Tamil heritage, culture and language among Tamils from the Indian subcontinent living abroad while money is spent lavishly to promote and teach Hindi not only to foreign-living Hindi people but also to non-Hindi peoples of Indian origin and to other foreigners. May be, if the Hindi politicians in India are in a good mood, they will allocate a few Rupees to non-Hindi languages, like the master throwing a chewed bone to the house dog while the Hindi family is eating a sumptuous feast at the table.

Actually it is not the money. After all Indian consular office in Durban is not charging a fee for Hindi classes, they want a fee only for Tamil classes. Indian government wants to extinguish the non-Hindi languages and cultures among non-Hindi peoples living abroad and Hindi-fy those non-Hindi peoples.

Reference

1. "Indian Government Language Policy: Destroy all Languages Except Hindi", Hindi Imposition papers: Volume 1 (edited by Thanjai Nalankilli), E-book available free on the Internet.

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8. Indian Government Blocks Tamil Development into the Twenty First Century

Thanjai Nalankilli

[First Published: September 1999; Updated: July 2010]

OUTLINE

1. Introduction
2. Engineering Education in Tamil
3. Indian Roadblock
4. Irrationality of the AICTE Decision
5. Compare Hindi Development and Tamil Development
6. A Three-Pronged Strategy for Hindi Supremacy

Abbreviations

AICTE - All India Council for Technical Education

1. Introduction

When cornered about Hindi imposition and the unjust nature of imposing their language on others, Hindi politicians who control and dominate the Indian government would resort to saying that they want all languages (in the "Indian Union") to develop and take their place replacing English. The truth of the matter is that Hindi people and politicians want Hindi, only Hindi, to replace English in all spheres of life, from government administration to private business, from education to entertainment. They do not want other languages to develop at all. Hindi politicians want the other languages to stagnate so Hindi can fill the vacuum as they slowly but surely remove English from governmental affairs. Hindi people and politicians do not want one's mother tongue to replace English but want their mother tongue Hindi to replace English, thus giving Hindi people enormous advantages and benefits.

Indian government spends hundreds of millions of Rupees every year to develop Hindi in such areas as computerization, developing technical terminology, writing science, technical, medical, law and business books, etc. We would have no qualms if the money for Hindi development comes from Hindi taxpayers (from Hindi states) but they spend non-Hindi speakers' money also to develop their mother tongue. While spending several hundred million Rupees annually on Hindi development, they dole out very little for the development of other languages. For example, Tamil Nadu pays over 10% of Indian government taxes but when it comes to language development our share is far smaller (the share is disproportionately huge for Hindi). It proves that Hindi politicians do not want every language to develop into modern languages in this technological era but want Hindi, and ONLY Hindi, to develop into the twenty-first century as a modern language capable of handling science and technology.

Not only does the Indian government spend the lion's share on Hindi development and a pittance on other languages, when a state tries to develop its language using its own state funds, Hindi politicians who dominate the Indian government block the development, thus preventing other languages from taking their due place in the next century. Here is an example.

2. Engineering Education in Tamil

Many students in Tamil Nadu find it difficult to study engineering with English as medium of instruction. It would be easier to study the basic concepts and procedures at the undergraduate level in Tamil. (Experience in technologically advanced nations like Germany, France, Russia, Japan and China where engineering education is in one's mother tongue proves the point.) With this in mind, the state government of Tamil Nadu developed a curriculum and books for undergraduate engineering education in Tamil. Many highly qualified engineers and professors participated in this effort over several years; many of them volunteered their time, for the love of Tamil.

An expert panel reviewed the curriculum, books and availability of lecturers and professors, and certified that a student studying engineering in Tamil in one of the approved colleges and passing the examinations would be as good an engineer as one studying in English. Arrangements were made to offer engineering undergraduate courses in Tamil in a few selected colleges. Announcements were made that students may apply to study in either English medium or Tamil medium. It was totally optional; no one was forced to study in Tamil. Only those who want to study in Tamil would be admitted to the Tamil-medium courses. Hundreds of students applied for the English medium and hundreds applied for the Tamil medium. (The Tamil medium students would have to take some English courses and prove their proficiency in English.) All was set to go. Then something happened on the way to Tamil medium engineering education in Tamil Nadu ... Indian government blocked it.

3. Indian Roadblock

All new engineering programs need approval from the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) created by the Indian government. It refused to approve the Tamil medium engineering program in 1997 and approval is still pending (as of July 2002). There is nothing Tamil Nadu can do about it.

What was the reason for disapproval? Is it that the curriculum does not meet the requirements for an engineering degree? No. AICTE did not say that, because the curriculum was meticulously developed by a committee of well-qualified engineers and professors to meet the standards set forth for English medium engineering programs. Then, what is wrong with the Tamil-medium program? Is it that these students will lack sufficient knowledge of English to understand reports and documents prepared in English? No. That was not the reason given either because the Tamil-medium program

requires that the students pass English examinations to demonstrate adequate proficiency in English. Then why did the AICTE disapprove the program?

AICTE says that it wants to wait until other states also develop engineering programs in their mother languages. Why should Tamil Nadu wait until similar programs are developed in other languages? Indian government, dominated by Hindi politicians, uses Hindi everywhere (examples given in Section 5). Are they waiting until they use other languages also? Then why this step motherly treatment for Tamil?

4. Irrationality of the AICTE Decision

AICTE's reasoning for disapproving Tamil-medium engineering program in Tamil Nadu does not make sense. Some years ago some Karnataka universities started offering engineering degrees in electronic communications, before other states had such offerings. AICTE did not delay approval of that program until other states also did the same. Many years ago Tamil Nadu was one of the first states to offer degree in mining engineering. No one stopped it until other states also started mining engineering programs. So why block Tamil-medium engineering education because other states do not have such a program, in spite of the fact that the program meets all requirement for an engineering degree.

Since AICTE's reasoning does not hold water, only conclusion we can reach is that Indian government does not want Tamil or other languages (except Hindi) to develop into modern languages suitable for science and technology.

5. Compare Hindi Development and Tamil Development

Indian government refuses to allow Tamil-medium engineering education in Tamil Nadu because it wants to wait until other states also develop such programs. Is the Indian government doing the same when it comes to Hindi use?

A few decades ago the Indian government introduced Hindi in the telegraph department. Using Hindi and non-Hindi speaking peoples' taxes, Hindi telegrams were made possible not only in Hindi states but in every telegraph office in every state, even in places where no one understood Hindi. It took more than a couple of decades until other languages were also introduced. Even now we can send telegrams in Tamil from only some offices in Tamil Nadu while Hindi telegrams can be sent from any office. Did the Indian government say, "We will delay the introduction of Hindi until everyone is able to send telegrams in the mother tongue?" No. Then why abort Tamil-medium engineering education in Tamil Nadu because other languages have no such programs? Is it not step-motherly treatment of the worst kind?

If a Member of Parliament (MP) speaks in English, it is automatically translated into Hindi for the benefit of Hindi MPs. Did the Indian government say, "We will wait until we have facilities to translate into all languages"? No. Then why is Tamil held back until

other languages also develop engineering programs? Is it not to block Tamil from developing into a technical and scientific language in the twenty-first century?

We can give many more examples. But I will give just one more from the engineering field.

What is more technically advanced than the field of nuclear physics and nuclear engineering? A friend who works in the Atomic Research Center told me of a memorandum from the Center Director. He asks every employee to do as much work as possible in Hindi, including taking notes at meetings, writing comments on margins of reports, etc. He also announces rewards for those who excel in the use of Hindi, with special rewards for those whose mother tongue is not Hindi.

Another Indian government department that is heavy in engineering and science is the Oil and Gas Commission (OGC). Here also every employee is asked to do as much work as possible in Hindi and there are rewards for those who do so. In fact the ministry responsible for the Oil and Gas Commission has a senior officer and several junior officers with the sole responsibility of overseeing that Hindi is used more and more in lieu of English.

Thus the Indian government is thrusting Hindi everywhere, including highly scientific and technical fields like nuclear energy and oil and gas exploration, even on unwilling non-Hindi employees, using Hindi and non-Hindi peoples' taxes. But when Tamil Nadu introduces Tamil-medium engineering education, using state government taxes, Indian government stomps it on the head so that Tamil won't emerge as a modern language suitable for engineering and science.

6. A Three-Pronged Strategy for Hindi Supremacy

Hindi politicians who dominate the Indian government have a three-prong strategy for Hindi supremacy (and thus supremacy Hindi people). (1) Remove English usage in government and business saying that it is a national shame to use the foreign English. (2) Pour Hindi and non-Hindi peoples' taxes into Hindi development while starving other languages for development funds. (3) If a state uses its own state taxes to develop its language to replace English in the state, block it using central government (Indian government) powers. (Years from now the Indian Government will allow Tamil-medium engineering education in Tamil Nadu, after Hindi has developed (in technical subjects) substantially over and above other languages in India. By then we will have to start from scratch, train new professors and lecturers to teach in Tamil, and update and write new technical books. Tamil would lose years of development because of Indian Government delay.)

This three-prong strategy has the effect of Hindi replacing English everywhere and thus making Hindi supreme. This elevates Hindi people to some type of first class citizens, and pushes down others to some type of second-tier citizens.

What are we going to do?

UPDATE (added August 2010)

We predicted in Section 6 of the article, "Years from now the Indian Government will allow Tamil-medium engineering education in Tamil Nadu, after Hindi has developed (in technical subjects) substantially over and above other languages in India". Finally, after well over a decade, it has happened. Tamil Nadu State Higher Education Minister K. Ponmudy announced in February 2010 that 11 colleges would offer Tamil medium of instructions in civil and mechanical engineering from the next academic year. Students may opt for Tamil or English medium. Even students studying in the English medium may write their examinations in Tamil if they so choose. Because of the obstructionism of AICTE, Tamil Nadu had to wait 13 years to introduce Tamil medium in engineering colleges.

We thank Chief Minister M. Karunanidhi and Higher Education Minister K. Ponmudy for their continued efforts in getting Tamil its due place in engineering education.

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9. Telegraph Service in Hindi and English Only: Where is Tamil?

Thanjai Nalankilli

[First Published: August 2006; Updated February 2018]

OUTLINE

1. Background
2. Indian Government, E-mails and Telegrams
3. How Hindi Ruled Supreme in Telegraph Services

1. Background

We are not talking here about the messenger service called "telegram" available on the Internet. We are discussing here the original telegram pre-dating Internet. Before e-mails became widely available, telegrams were the fastest way to send messages. Messages were sent through telegraph wires that networked around the world. In India, telegraph services were under the control of the Indian government like the Indian postal service. Every city and almost every town was wired and messages were sent instantly from one telegraph office to another, and then delivered to the recipient by a human messenger. Once e-mail became popular telegraph service became obsolete. So Indian government ended the telegraph services in 2013.

2. Indian Government, E-mails and Telegrams

This article discusses how the Indian government discriminated all Indian languages except Hindi in this vital communication tool in those days when telegraph was vital to businesses and individuals for sending urgent messages. In contrast, e-mails, successor to telegrams, is available in most Indian languages because e-mail is not under government control but privately offered and operated. Also look at social media like Facebook, Twitter and messenger. They are all privately operated and many Indian languages can be used. If these services were under Indian government control, you can be certain that Hindi would rule in these services and other languages would be sidelined. **When Indian government has a monopoly to a useful or vital service and no competitive private services are available, it will use it to impose Hindi by making the service available in Hindi and English only and ignoring all other languages.** Telegraph services is an example from the past. Now we discuss what happened during the days of telegraph services.

3. How Hindi Ruled Supreme in Telegraph Services

Telegraphs were brought to India during the British colonial rule. English was the only language in which telegrams could be sent in India during the British rule. After the British rule ended and the Hindi-dominated Indian government was formed in 1947,

Hindi was also soon added but other Indian languages were ignored. Telegrams could be sent in English or Hindi only in Tamil Nadu and everywhere in India. That put those who do not know English or Hindi at a disadvantage. After decades of requests and pleas from Tamil leaders, Indian government finally agreed to facilitate Tamil telegrams in some telegraph centres in Tamilnadu from January 14, 1994. (A special thanks goes to Congress leader Mr. *Kumari Anandan who relentlessly worked to introduce Tamil telegrams. It is seldom that Congress leaders from Tamilnadu do something for Tamil. Kumari Anandan is one of the few exceptions.)

Even then, **only a limited number telegraph centres**, mostly in major cities and towns, had Tamil telegraph facilities. This is unfortunate because it was the smaller towns closer to rural areas that needed Tamil telegraphs the most because not many knew English in these areas. People who do not know English and know only Tamil do send telegrams. May be not as many as those who know English but they do send telegrams and those telegrams are sometimes very important to them. Once in our village a villager who knows only Tamil received a telegram in English. I had the unfortunate task of translating the telegram to this elderly gentleman. The telegram told of the untimely death of his son in an accident in the town he was working. His daughter-in-law might have asked someone to write the English telegram. I know many instances where the death of a father or mother in the village was telegraphed to the children in far away cities.

In 2005, Indian government closed down Tamil telegraph facilities in all or most of the telegraph centers in Tamil Nadu (while Hindi and English telegrams could be sent from any telegraph center in Tamilnadu). The Indian government stated that it was doing so because not many people are sending Tamil telegrams.

A few question beg to be asked. If the number of telegrams sent in Tamil is the criterion, how many telegrams are sent in Hindi from Tamil Nadu (other than those sent by Indian Government offices which are forced to send certain percentage of communications in Hindi)? If that number is small, why are Hindi telegraphic facilities in Tamil Nadu still operating in every telegraphic center in Tamil Nadu? Use the same yardstick used to shut down Tamil telegraphic facilities. We also want to point out that lack of Tamil telegrams inconveniences at least some people in Tamil Nadu who know only Tamil. There is no need for Hindi telegrams because those Hindi speakers living in Tamil Nadu know either English or Tamil. If not, they should. Why should a Hindi speaker from over a thousand miles be able to send Hindi telegrams from Tamil Nadu, even though a Tamil speaker cannot send a Tamil telegram from his own native Tamil Nadu?

A German can send a German telegram in Germany. A Thai can send a Thai telegram in Thailand. An Armenian can send an Armenian telegram in Armenia. A Tamil should be able to send a Tamil telegram in Tamil Nadu. [We are discussing what happened before privately operated e-mail services replaced Indian government operated telegraph services in 2013. How Indian government discriminated all non-Hindi languages in telegraph services should not be forgotten.]

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10. Tamil in Indian Government Websites?

Thanjai Nalankilli

[First Published: August 2018]

OUTLINE

1. Introduction
 2. Tamil Presence on the Web
 3. Eight Examples of Indian Government Websites
 4. Concluding Remarks
- Reference

[Though we discuss how India is blocking out Tamil in most of Indian government websites, this is true of all non-Hindi languages. We highlight Tamil because this book is on Tamil language. A broader discussion of how all non-Hindi languages spoken in India are discriminated in Indian government websites is discussed in our book "Hindi Imposition Papers: Volume 15". There is some overlap of information between those articles and Section 3 here.]

1. Introduction

Most multinational corporate websites offer multiple language options so people may access information or use the website in their mother tongues. Already many languages spoken in India are available in many multinational corporate websites. The technology for multiple-languages websites is there. Yet most Indian government websites are in English and Hindi only (as of 2017). If Tamil Nadu puts sufficient pressure, may be Indian government would add Tamil in a few more government websites. Why should we wait? It is like a mother allowing her daughter to sit at the dinner table and eat a sumptuous meal and then any leftover food is given to the stepdaughters. We want to eat at the table at the same time as the Hindi people. We pay taxes. We demand equality on Indian Government websites.

2. Tamil Presence on the Web

There are tens of thousands of Tamil web sites today because of private efforts. If all web sites were under government control there would have been only Hindi websites; no other Indian languages would have presence. Only websites under Indian government control are Indian government websites and non-Hindi languages are mostly ignored. If you have any doubt about this look back. There was something called telegraph services for fast transmittal of information; it became obsolete after e-mails. Telegraph service was government control in India and it offered the services in English and Hindi only. After much effort, protests and demonstrations by Tamil political leaders, Tamil was also

offered in some telegraph offices in cities while Hindi and English were available in ALL telegraph offices in Tamil Nadu. You can read all about it in Chapter 9.

Thanks to the pioneering work of some devoted Tamils working in the Information Technology field, Tamil is the first South Asian language to go on the Internet and the Worldwide Web. Some of the early research on using Tamil on the Internet took place in Singapore, at Nanyang Technological University and National University of Singapore. One of the principal researchers was Naa Govindasamy. We thank the Government of Singapore for funding those projects. If it were left to Indian government we would have only Hindi and English websites. Only websites under Indian government control are Indian government websites. There Tamil is ignored. We present some examples in the next section.

3. Eight Examples of Indian Government Websites

We give eight examples of Indian government websites that are in English and Hindi only (this is not a complete list, there are dozens more such websites).

(1) Indian Railways, operated by the Indian government, created a website www.coms.indianrailways.gov.in where people can file complaints; you can file complaints in English or Hindi only (as of March 2015). Tamil people travel in Indian railways too. They have complaints too. If India is an equitable country for all, all the peoples, irrespective of language, must have the same privileges and rights.

(2) Secretary, Department of Official Language Secretary Girish Shankar said during the Eleventh "World Hindi Day" in New Delhi, "in our bid to promote usage of Hindi, we are also bringing classic works like those of Premchand and others authors available on the web for our employees, who wish to read those literature." (Economic Times; January 10, 2016). So our tax monies are used to Hindi books on the web for Indian workers to read? A Hindi employee can relax and read some Hindi classics at our expense. What about a Tamil employee who wants to relax by reading some Tamil classics? Why is this discrimination based on language?

(3) Secretary of the Department of Official Language (under the Home Ministry) instructed that all central government websites should be in Hindi and English and the default opening of websites should be Hindi (Economic Times; January 23, 2016). No mention of other languages. No plans to include other languages.

(4) Indian Government set up a web site to help voters www.electoralsearch.in There you can locate polling stations near your house, apply for enrollment in the electoral roll, etc. This site is in Hindi and English only (as of April 2016). So only Hindi people can get the information and register in their mother tongue. Others have to know at least one of two alien languages, Hindi or English. This is outrageous in the so-called largest democracy. It is not democracy it is Hindi crazy.

(5) Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) website page for e-ticketing is in Hindi and English only. Near the top of the page there is an option to choose Hindi or English. (As seen on June 2, 2016.) Our demand is, provide option to reserve tickets in all Indian languages. All Indian languages are equal. We all pay taxes to the Indian government.

(6) Indian government's Department of Consumer Affairs website is in English and Hindi only. They also have a Toll Free number and it provides information in English and Hindi only. (As seen on September 7, 2016). A lot of people in my village do not know Hindi or English. Only language they know is Tamil. Are they orphans whom Bharatmata (Mother India) does not care?

(7) Passport and visa information will be in Hindi and English on the official website of the external affairs ministry. People can download passport application form in Hindi, fill it in Hindi and upload it (OneIndia.com; April 23, 2017). Where are the other languages?

(8) On July 26, 2014, Prime Minister Modi opened a new web site where people can make suggestions and discuss how to better govern the country (<http://mygov.nic.in/>). Mr. Modi said that the web site "would bridge gap gulf between people and government. Democracy cannot succeed without people's participation in government and this participation should not be limited only during elections". I visited this web site on July 28, 2014; the web site is in English and Hindi only. Where is Tamil? Are we not citizens of India? Are we of a lower grade than Hindus? They can make suggestions and discuss on better governance of India in their mother tongue, why can't we? Are we stepchildren of mother India?

4. Concluding Remarks

Technology to use all Indian languages in web site exists. Major private companies like Google and Facebook allow users to read their contents and write comments in many dozens of languages. Why is Indian government restricting to just English and Hindi? It is the imperial attitude of Hindi people and politicians. This is not democracy, this is Hindi-crazy.

In the course of the article, we mentioned that we, non-Hindi peoples, pay taxes and yet we are treated like step children. Do you know that some non-Hindi states pay far more taxes to Indian government than Hindi states? I will give the example of Tamil Nadu and the largest Hindi State Uttar Pradesh. For every 100 Rupees Indian government collects in taxes from Tamil Nadu, only 40 Rupees is given back to Tamil Nadu in the form of financial grants, central government projects, etc. In contrast, for every 100 Rupees Indian government collects in taxes from Uttar Pradesh, 179 Rupees is given back to it in the form of financial grants, central government projects, etc. [Reference 1] It is unfair, it is unjust. We want fairness, we want justice.

FOOTNOTE: Occasionally Indian Government does act on Tamil on the Internet but in each case it degrades and degenerates Tamil and attempts to subordinate Tamil to

Sanskrit language and Devanagari script. Examples are given in the last 4 chapters of this book.

Reference

1.
<http://web.archive.org/web/20160715145421/http://www.thenewsminute.com/article/unit-ed-states-south-india-can-southern-collective-get-us-better-deal-delhi-46501> (The News Minute: 14 July)

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11.

Indian Government, Tamil Unicode and Devanagari Script

(How Indian Government "Down-Graded" Tamil Unicode?)

Thanjai Nalankilli

[First Published: January 2017]

OUTLINE

Executive Summary

1. What is Unicode?
2. Indian Government Makes Tamil Script a Subset of Devanagari
3. How Tamil Unicode was "Degraded"?
4. An Un-needed Crutch for Tamil
5. Indian Government Promoting Devanagari Script
 - 5.1. The Case of Konkani Language
 - 5.2. The Case of Kashmiri Language
 - 5.3. The Case of Indian Posts and Telegraph
6. A Request to Computer Standards Organizations

ABBREVIATION

ISO - International Standardization Organization (International Organization for Standardization)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Tamil script is better suited for computer rendering than Devanagari script because Tamil does not have conjunct consonants. Because of Indian government's incorrect recommendation that Tamil script be treated as a subset of Devanagari script, Tamil is brought down a notch to the same level as Devanagari. Intentional or not, it is unfortunate. We request that computer standards organizations consult the state governments (organized on linguistic basis) on matters relating to Indian languages.

1. What is Unicode?

Unicode is a standard system adopted by major computer software developers to create documents in different languages using computers. For those who want a more technical definition: Unicode is an international encoding standard to support the processing and display of written texts of diverse languages across different platforms and programs.

2. Indian Government Makes Tamil Script a Subset of Devanagari

The Unicode consortium approached Indian government for its recommendations for the various "Indian languages". (We want to point that there is no linguistic family called

"Indian languages". The phrase "Indian languages" refers to the languages spoken within the country of India that was formed in 1947 following the end of British rule over South Asia. There are many languages in this country, some dating back to thousands of years and some hundreds of years. There is no common script for all these languages; neither do all the scripts fall under some "script family".)

Indian government asked the Unicode consortium to treat all Indian language scripts as subsets of Devanagari script although linguistically Devanagari is not a superset nor super-script for Tamil script (and may be some other Indian languages too).

3. How Tamil Unicode was "Degraded"?

Because the Indian government asked the Unicode consortium to treat all Indian language scripts as subsets of Devanagari script although linguistically (scientifically) Devanagari is not a superset nor super-script for Tamil script, writing and displaying Tamil script on computers less efficient and less optimal (sub-optimal). [Author borrowed the terms superscript and sub-optimal from Mani Manivannan's posts in Facebook in October 2014.] The following paragraph is based on Mr. Manivannan's 2014 interview to a Tamil magazine [Reference 1] and his Facebook posts in October 2014.

"A major difference between Tamil and Devanagari scripts is that Tamil script does not have conjunct consonants like Devanagari. Because Unicode Tamil script does not have conjunct consonants, Unicode could have used a linear arrangement of Tamil consonants. This would have made it unnecessary for the use of "complex rendering engine" (Devanagari requires it. If properly done Tamil would not have.) But because the Indian government asked Unicode consortium to make Tamil script a subset of Devanagari script, Tamil also now requires complex rendering engine. This makes display of Tamil text in some word processing software incorrect and searching Tamil text in Adobe PDF software Acrobat difficult, until these software implement complex script support." A more detailed discussion may be found in Reference 1; we suggest that those who know Tamil read that reference for more information. [Mani M. Manivannan was chairman of Tamil Unicode Working Group of the International Forum for Information Technology in Tamil (INFITT)]

4. An Un-needed Crutch for Tamil

By asking the Unicode to treat Tamil script as a subset of Devanagari script, Indian government made Tamil wear a crutch it does not need. Let me explain. Tamil script is better suited for computers than Devanagari because it does not have conjunct consonants. Scripts that have conjunct consonants (for example, Devanagari) need complex rendering engine (an additional software) to display the letters properly on screen and in searching text. By making Tamil script a subset of Devanagari, Indian government had made it necessary for Tamil also to require complex rendering engine (a necessary "crutch" for Devanagari but an unnecessary crutch for Tamil).

5. Indian government promoting Devanagari Script

Indian government asking the consortium to treat Devanagari script as the superscript for all Indian languages seems to be an intentional effort to set Devanagari script above all else. Devanagari script is used to write Sanskrit and Hindi, the two languages favoured by Indian government. Indian government pushing Devanagari script over and above other Indian language scripts is not new.

5.1. The Case of Konkani Language

Konkani language is spoken mostly in southern India. Majority of Konkani speakers live in Karnataka State (Kannada is the primary state language). Konkani does not have its own script. Most Konkani literature is written in Kannada script, with some literature in Malayalam, Roman (English), Arabic and Devanagari. In 2016, Indian Government's Sahitya Academy made it mandatory for Konkani submissions for the prestigious Sahitya Academy Awards be in the Devanagari script (Bangalore Mirror; May 2, 2016). Sahitya Academy's order is like imposing Devanagari script on the Konkani language. Some Konkani scholars sued the academy and it is still pending in court.

5.2. The Case of Kashmiri Language

Indian government proposed in 2005 that Devanagari be used as an alternative script for Kashmiri language although there is a distinct Kashmiri script for over five centuries. The proposal was dropped because of opposition among Kashmiri speakers. Indian government again brought out the same proposal in 2016. Kashmiri writers and poets opposed the idea again (Kashmir Reader; May 24, 2016).

5.3. The Case of Indian Posts and Telegraph

When telegraph was a popular form of long-distance communication (before the days of fax and e-mail), Indian government allowed only English and Hindi. When other language groups wanted telegraph in their languages too, Indian government told them that they may telegraph in their language if they write the message in Devanagari script; another attempt to force people to use Devanagari script. Indian government yielded after much protests from Tamil Nadu and Tamil was also made available in some telegraph offices.

Thus asking Unicode consortium to use Indian language scripts as subsets of Devanagari seems to be yet another attempt to thrust this script into other languages.

6. A Request to Computer Standards Organizations

Indian government is not the guardian of all Indian languages. Guardians of Indian languages are the state governments where the respective languages are spoken. Karnataka for Kannada, Kerala for Malayalam, Maharashtra for Marathi, Tamil Nadu for Tamil, Andhra and Telengana for Telugu, etc. So international standardization organizations like ISO should consult state governments (if necessary, through the Indian

government) and take their recommendations into account. This is the only way to protect the uniqueness and integrity of Indian languages.

Reference

1. <http://www.yarl.com/forum3/index.php?showtopic=144938>

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12. Indian Government Attempts to "Pollute" Tamil Unicode with Grantha Characters

Thanjai Nalankilli

[First Published: December 2018]

OUTLINE

1. Introduction
2. Background
3. Attempted Pollution in 2010
4. A Second Attempt to Mix Grantha and Tamil Characters
5. Indian Government and Tamil Nadu State Government Enter the Debate
6. A Sinister Attempt to Degrade Tamil and Elevate Sanskrit?

1. Introduction

Unicode is a standard system adopted by major computer software developers to create documents in different languages using computers. This system is managed and maintained by the Unicode Consortium. Like most other languages, Tamil also has a block allotted to it in the Unicode system. Tamil Nadu State Government is a voting member of the Unicode Consortium since May 2007. Indian Government is a voting member even before that.

2. Background

Unicode system makes it possible to type the 247 Tamil letters (characters) in computers. In addition Unicode also includes the five Grantha letters (characters) "ja, sha, sa, ha and sri" used in some commonly used Sanskrit-origin words or Sanskritized Tamil words such as "rajan" or "kashtam"; Tamil Nadu State Government has accepted this inclusion. I want to point out that these five are not Tamil letters (characters) but Grantha letters used to spell some Sanskrit-origin words or Sanskritized Tamil words. Tamil has only 247 letters and these 5 are not among them.

This article is not about the inclusion of these 5 Grantha letters in the Tamil Unicode block. This article about an attempt by some private individual(s) and Indian government to add 26 more Grantha letters, which not even one in a million Tamil people have heard about. It was used only twice in two obscure books in the past 100 years. (1 million = 10 lakhs).

3. Attempted Pollution in 2010

A gentleman named Sri Ramana Sharma proposed to the Unicode consortium in 2010 that space be allocated in the Tamil Unicode block for 26 Grantha characters. Many

Tamil scholars believe that it is an unnecessary addition because these letters are not used by Tamil writers. Proponents of adding these 26 characters could show only two examples of their usage anywhere in the last 100 years. The two books are (1) Bhoja Sharitham by T.S. Narayan Shastry (1916), and (2) Shiva Manasa Puja Kirthanas mattrum Aathma Vidya Vilasa by Sri Sadasiva Paramendra (1951).

Many Tamil scholars, organizations and Tamil Nadu state government opposed the addition. Professor G. Hart of University of California (Berkeley, United States of America (USA)) who has extensive knowledge of Sanskrit and Tamil opposed the proposal and wrote [Reference 1], "Mr. Sri Rama Sharma proposed to the Unicode consortium that space be allocated in the Tamil Unicode Block for Grantha (Sanskrit) characters...It would, in my view, be a serious mistake to include Sanskrit sounds (except for those in general use, like "ja") in Tamil unicode... Keeping Grantha and Tamil separate, with separate Unicode blocks, should satisfy everyone. If one looks through Sangam literature or Kampan, there is not a Grantha letter to be found. In modern Tamil books, the only Grantha letters are those few that are needed for foreign words [The professor is referring to the 5 Grantha letters already included in Tamil Unicode block]. There is absolutely no need to expand the Tamil Unicode slots to include the unused Grantha letters [He is referring to the 26 Grantha letters]. The inclusion of Sanskrit sounds in Tamil, where necessary, can easily be accomplished by combining Tamil and Grantha, leaving Tamil as it is at present."

Because of the opposition from Tamil scholars, organizations and Tamil Nadu State Government, the proposal was not accepted.

4. A Second Attempt to Mix Grantha and Tamil Characters

The second attempt was to create a Grantha block in Unicode. Tamil scholars or Tamil Nadu state government have no objection to it. What we object is the proposal to include 5 Tamil characters (letters) "a, o, za, Ra, na" into the Grantha Unicode block. If they cannot mix Tamil and Grantha characters by adding 26 Grantha characters into Tamil Unicode block, they would mix Tamil and Grantha characters by adding 5 Tamil characters (letters) into the Grantha block. Tamil scholars objected to this also.

5. Indian Government and Tamil Nadu State Government Enter the Debate

Although the proposal to include 5 Tamil letters into the Gratha block came from private individuals, Indian government supported that proposal. Indian government wrote to Unicode on September 6, 2010 supporting the inclusion of the 5 Tamil letters into Grantha block. Indian government did not consult Tamil scholars or even inform Tamil Nadu government of their support for mixing Tamil characters with Grantha. When Tamil scholars came to know of Indian government support, they opposed it and also informed the Tamil Nadu government.

The then Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M. Karunanidhi wrote to Indian Government Minister for Communications and Information Technology on November 6, 2010

[Reference 2]. He wrote, "... This proposal has raised considerable concern from a wide cross-section of Tamil community from around the world. They have indicated that sufficient consultations have not taken place with eminent Tamil language scholars, before submitting the proposal. In particular, considerable reservations have been expressed about inclusion of five Tamil characters into the Grantha code places."

6. A Sinister Attempt to Degrade Tamil and Elevate Sanskrit?

Several Tamil Unicode experts have pointed out that there is no technical advantage in mixing Tamil and Grantha characters rather than have two separate unicode blocks with no overlap or duplication. For example, Director of Tamil Virtual Academy Dr. P.R. Nakkeeran wrote [Reference 3], " Adding characters that are native to Tamil script but not part of the Grantha script can potentially lead to confusion when digitizing ancient Tamil inscriptions that have Grantha characters". Readers interested in the technical details may read References 3, 4 and some of the references listed in Reference 4.

There are Sanskrit enthusiasts in India who want to elevate Sanskrit as the supreme language of India. Tamil writers had used Sanskrit words in their writings and Sanskrit writers had use Tamil words in their wrings. This does not mean one is the mother of the other or one is older or superior to the other. Many people use English words today while speaking/writing Tamil, Telugu, Hindi, etc. Does this mean English is the mother of all these languages? Absolutely, not.

Mother-daughter relationship has to be established on the basis of etymology, grammar and other factors. I am not a linguist and I cannot elaborate further on it. So I quote Dr. G. Hart (Professor of Tamil at University of California, Berkeley, USA). Professor Hart is uniquely qualified to comment on the relationship between Sanskrit and Tamil. He knows Sanskrit and Tamil well. He got his doctorate degree in Sanskrit from one of the top universities in the world - Harvard University, USA. He has also studied Latin, Greek and Tamil. He has translated to English some classic Tamil literature. He published books on Tamil and Sanskrit. He served as Professor of Sanskrit at University of Wisconsin (USA) before becoming Professor of Tamil at University of California. Here is what he has to say [Reference 5]: "Tamil had the good fortune to gain an extensive written literature before the Sanskrit juggernaut became irresistible. Its early works owe virtually nothing to Sanskrit. ... Because Tamil developed its own identity so early, it remained relatively immune to the influence of Sanskrit. It retained (and retains) its own writing system that genuinely fits the pronunciation of the language ... The early origins of Tamil and of its writing system have helped it keep its separate identity from Sanskrit.... Its separate identity and character have been cultivated and preserved from its beginnings to the present".

This is the view of a scholar in both Sanskrit and Tamil. Yet some Sanskrit enthusiasts, including some Indian government ministers, continue to assert Sanskrit is the supreme language of India, and all other languages owe to Sanskrit.

A former Indian minister for human resources development (HRD), Mr. Murli Manohar Joshi, said, "Every Indian language is associated with Sanskrit. Some are directly derived from it and some have a large component as their diction, vocabulary and grammar" (Rediff on the Net; February 23, 2002). India's home minister Rajnath Singh said in September 2015, "mother language of all Indian languages Sanskrit" (Hindustan Times; September 16, 2015). There is no basis for these statements. Yet some Sanskrit enthusiasts continue to repeat it; unfortunately some of these people are in positions of power to set language policies in India. The fact that all three ministers we quoted are Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leaders does not mean that Indian government supports Sanskrit supremacy policies only when BJP is in power. In fact Indian government sent Unicode consortium the proposal to include 5 Tamil characters in the Grantha Unicode block (discussed in Section 4) when Congress Party was in power. One party may be more open and vocal but both parties have more or less the same language policy.

Attempts to include some Grantha characters in Tamil Unicode block and some Tamil characters in the Grantha Unicode block seem like an attempt to mix Tamil characters with Grantha and then claim years later that Tamil is not self-sufficient unlike Sanskrit and thus assert falsely Sanskrit supremacy. So we shall continue to oppose mixing Tamil and Grantha characters in Unicode by the inclusion of 26 Grantha characters into Tamil Unicode block or including 5 Tamil characters into the Grantha Unicode block.

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13.

Indian Government Pollutes Tamil Website with Hindi-Sanskrit Words

Thanjai Nalankilli

[First Published: February 2019]

OUTLINE

1. Introduction
2. Details
3. Not-so-hidden Agenda of the Indian Government: Degradation of Tamil and Elevation of Hindi-Sanskrit
4. What Shall We Do?

1. Introduction

The Central Institute of Indian Languages (CIIL) in Mysuru, Karnataka State funded by the Indian Government Ministry of Human Resource Development (HRD) has a project "Bharatavani: Knowledge through Indian languages". Its website has dictionaries, learning tools, books, etc. in various Indian languages. It is a good effort but Indian government imposes Hindi even in this worthwhile project; it unnecessarily, purposively and sinisterly degrades Tamil by mixing Hindi-Sanskrit words in the Tamil web page. Here are the details.

2. Details

The following information is based on what the author saw at their website on February 22, 2018. If you go to the main page [Reference 1] you will see Hindi and English but there are also links to various Indian language pages. That is good. Problem is in the Tamil web page. In the Tamil opening page [Reference 2], there are five main links. The problem is they are Hindi words written in Tamil script. These are some of the links in the Tamil page as they appear in that page [You notice that the links are in Tamil script (letters) with English script in parentheses]. I have presented it in both graphic format (jpg format) and in Tamil Unicode script because some e-readers do not show graphics imbedded in text and some e-readers do not show Tamil Unicode letters at all or show as some garbled script. Some e-readers show them both correctly.

In graphic format (jpg file):

1. பாஷா கோஷா
(Bhashakosha)
2. பாத்யபுஸ்தக கோஷா
(Textbooks)
3. ஞான கோஷா
(Jhanakosha)
4. பஹுமாத்யம கோஷா
(Multimedia)
5. ஷப்த கோஷா
(Dictionary)

In Tamil Unicode letters:

1. பாஷா கோஷா
(Bhashakosha)
2. பாத்யபுஸ்தக கோஷா
(Textbooks)
3. ஞான கோஷா
(Jhanakosha)
4. பஹுமாத்யம கோஷா
(Multimedia)
5. ஷப்த கோஷா
(Dictionary)

No Tamil will understand what these links mean unless he/she knows Hindi. Three of the five links are translated to English but remaining two links are Hindi-Sanskrit words written in English script. So people who know Tamil only would not understand any of the links. People who know English would understand 3 links. Only people who know Hindi would understand all 5 links.

For example, the second link says, "பாத்யபுஸ்தக கோஷா (Textbooks)"

"பாத்யபுஸ்தக கோஷா (Textbooks)". I understand it because I know English.

What about Tamils who do not know English? Tamil translation for textbooks is பாட

நூல்கள் (paada noolkaL) பாட நூல்கள் (paada noolkaL). Any Tamil with a fifth

grade education will understand it. No Tamil without a knowledge of Hindi or Sanskrit

will understand பாத்யபுஸ்தக கோஷா பாத்யபுஸ்தக கோஷா .

This is not accidental or incidental that Hindi-Sanskrit words are unnecessarily infused into Tamil.

3. Not-so-hidden Agenda of the Indian Government: Degradation of Tamil and Elevation of Hindi-Sanskrit

There are Sanskrit enthusiasts in India who want to elevate Sanskrit as the supreme language of India. Some of them are powerful politicians including Indian government ministers. One thing that stands in the way of declaring Sanskrit supremacy is Tamil that is old, still alive and independent of Sanskrit or other languages. Professor G. Hart is a scholar in both Sanskrit and Tamil, has taught Sanskrit and Tamil at American universities and has published books on both languages. He said the following: "Tamil had the good fortune to gain an extensive written literature before the Sanskrit juggernaut became irresistible. Its early works owe virtually nothing to Sanskrit. ... Because Tamil developed its own identity so early, it remained relatively immune to the influence of Sanskrit. It retained (and retains) its own writing system that genuinely fits the pronunciation of the language ... The early origins of Tamil and of its writing system have helped it keep its separate identity from Sanskrit.... Its separate identity and character have been cultivated and preserved from its beginnings to the present" [Reference 3].

This is the view of a scholar in both Sanskrit and Tamil. Yet some Sanskrit enthusiasts, including some Indian government ministers, continue to assert Sanskrit is the supreme language of India, and all other languages owe to Sanskrit.

A former Indian minister for human resources development (HRD), Mr. Murli Manohar Joshi, said, "Every Indian language is associated with Sanskrit. Some are directly derived from it and some have a large component as their diction, vocabulary and grammar" (Rediff on the Net; February 23, 2002). India's home minister Rajnath Singh said in September 2015, "mother language of all Indian languages Sanskrit" (Hindustan Times; September 16, 2015). There is no basis for these statements. Year from now people like these could show the web site to declare Tamil needs to use these Hindi-Sanskrit words and cannot survive without them in the modern computer age.

4. What Shall We Do?

An article like this does not get wide circulation. We ask Tamil people and Tamil activist groups to write/contact Tamil Nadu State government and pro-Tamil politicians about this Central Institute of Indian Languages (CIIL) website. Tamil Nadu state government and pro-Tamil politicians should publicly criticize it and write to Indian government and the Central Institute of Indian Languages (CIIL) to use Tamil words instead of the Hindi-Sanskrit words throughout the website. When we say Tamil words, we mean pure Tamil words and not Sanskritized or Englified Tamil words. If necessary, they should consult or hire Tamil scholars to create Tamil pages on their websites.

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14. Hindi-centric Automated Computer Translation of Indian Languages (Tamil, Kannada, Malayalam, Telugu ...)

Thanjai Nalankilli

[First Published: November 2016]

OUTLINE

Abbreviations

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5. Quality of Computer Translations Degraded by this Multi-Step Approach
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ABBREVIATIONS

ISO - International Standardization Organization (International Organization for Standardization)

TIFAC - Technology Information, Forecasting and Assessment Council

A NOTE

Author of this article is from Tamil Nadu and so Tamil language is used as an example but the conclusions of this article are applicable to some other Indian languages also.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Executive Director of an Indian government affiliated organization, TIFAC, had suggested that automated computer translation of all Indian languages from English go through a meta-language. Although the meta-language was not specified, based on our experience with the Indian government, we have reason to expect that meta-language would be either Hindi or Sanskrit. This Hindi-centric approach should be opposed because all Indian languages would forever become dependent on Hindi and the quality of translations would also suffer.

1. Introduction

Indian language localization community (those involved in creating Internet content in local languages like Hindi, Telugu, Tamil, Marathi, Kannada, Bengali ...) met in New

Delhi (India) on September 24-25, 2016. A proposal by the executive director of TIFAC, Dr. Prabhat Ranjan, raised concern in this writer. "Ranjan's team found English to Hindi translation easier when documents are first translated into another Indian language. Based on this experience, Ranjan bounced the idea of agreeing on a meta language to ease the translation process." [Reference 3]. Reference 3 did not mention what was the "another Indian language" that Dr. Ranjan's team used in the English to Hindi translation. Also, Dr. Ranjan did not suggest a choice for the meta-language.

Our fear is that the Indian government or some other organization or individual may try to elevate Hindi or Sanskrit as the meta language on the basis of Dr. Ranjan's statement, although he did not suggest a choice for the meta-language at the meeting.

TIFAC is an autonomous body under Department of Science and Technology of Government of India. Indian government efforts to establish Hindi/Sanskrit as a super-language over all other Indian languages is no secret. Indian government Home Minister Rajnath Singh said that Sanskrit is the mother of all Indian languages and he considers Hindi as the elder sister of all regional languages because it is closer to Sanskrit (Hindustan Times; September 16, 2015). This statement may be true for SOME Indian languages but false for others, for example, Tamil. One should not bunch linguistically unrelated languages into a single family.

This effort to establish Hindi/Sanskrit as a meta language through which all automated computer translations flow should be opposed, and international standardization bodies like ISO should not accept it. These bodies should not become unwitting tools in the hands of the Indian government or other vested interests.

2. A Few Questions to TIFAC

Summary of Dr. Prabhat Ranjan's speech says, "Our team found English to Hindi translation easier when documents are first translated into another Indian language". What was that "another Indian language"? Was it Sanskrit or some other Indo-Aryan language? It would not be a surprise if that "another Indian language" was Sanskrit or another Indo-Aryan language. Not all Indian languages are related to Sanskrit/Hindi. His conclusion would not hold for those languages. Tamil, for one, has very little in common with Sanskrit/Hindi. Professor George L. Hart of University of California, Berkeley, United States of America (USA) said, "Tamil is extremely old (as old as Latin and older than Arabic); it arose as an entirely independent tradition, with almost no influence from Sanskrit or other languages" [Reference 1]. He says, "The early origins of Tamil and of its writing system have helped it keep its separate identity from Sanskrit.Its separate identity and character have been cultivated and preserved from its beginnings to the present, and they will be preserved." [Reference 2].

Just because a small percentage words are common between Sanskrit and Tamil, neither may be concluded as derived from the other. There are so many English words used in Tamil these days; it does not mean Tamil is derived from English.

3. There is no Language Family Called "Indian Languages" (from Linguistic Perspective)

There is no language family or language group called "Indian Languages" from the perspective of linguistics. Indian languages is a political marker or geographic marker. The two main language families in India (or South Asia) are Indo-Aryan and Dravidian. Indo-Aryan languages are spoken by about 78.05% of Indians and Dravidian languages spoken by about 19.64%. The remaining 2.31% people speak languages belonging to Austro-Asiatic, Sino-Tibetan, Tai-Kadai and a few other minor language families [Reference 4]. Hindi and Sanskrit and a number of other languages belong to the Indo-Aryan family; Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam and some other languages belong to the Dravidian family.

Any suggestions or recommendations of translating English to any Indian language through Sanskrit/Hindi (or any "Indian meta language") is without merit. It has no scientific rationale. Using data, if any exists, of translating English to an Indo-Aryan language through Hindi/Sanskrit to justify translating English to a Dravidian language through Hindi/Sanskrit would be voodoo science, voodoo-linguistics. It is unacceptable.

4. English-to-Tamil versus English-to-Hindi-to-Tamil

For the sake of argument let us say that Hindi-to-Tamil automated computer translation is cheaper and more accurate than English-to-Tamil translation. Is English-to-Hindi-to-Tamil translation cheaper and more accurate than English-to-Tamil? I doubt it. Such a scenario should be studied and established for each and every Indian language--be it Telugu or Malayalam or Kannada or Telugu or Bengali or Oriya or Manipuri. We cannot accept this meta language suggestion based on undemonstrated hypotheses.

5. Quality of Computer Translations Degraded by this Multi-Step Approach

It is an established fact that quality is degraded during automated computer translations. If one translates a text from English to Russian and then translate back the translated Russian text to English, it would not be the same as the original English text. The same would happen in the proposed meta language three-step approach. A direct translation would be truer to the original text than an indirect three-step approach suggested by TIFAC executive director Dr. Ranjan. That is, a Tamil translation directly from English would be closer to the original English text than first translating English to Hindi and then Hindi to Tamil. So Hindi would end up with higher quality translations and the other Indian languages like Marathi, Oriya, Bengali, Kannada, Malayalam, Telugu would end up with lesser quality translations. We cannot allow such a systematic two-tier approach, a higher level of translation for Hindi/Sanskrit and a lower level of translation for the other languages.

6. Oppose the Meta-Language Approach

We explained in the preceding sections how centralizing translations through Sanskrit/Hindi would be detrimental to many Indian languages. Politicians, scholars and the public should oppose this approach. Tamil scholars and computer specialists active in automated computer translation of Indian languages should contact the Unicode standards organizations and request them to contact not only the Indian government but also state governments on language related matters. India is a multi-lingual country. States were reorganized on the basis of languages in the 1950s so that the major languages have a state where each major language can flourish. State governments are there to nurture and protect them. So it is appropriate that recommendations on languages come from the states.

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3. GILT-Conference
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POSTSCRIPT

Chapters 1, 2 and 3 of this book discuss the hypocrisy of some top North Indian politicians praising Tamil and then engage in imposing Hindi and promoting Sanskrit. After the initial publication of this book in 2019, we came across a new mini-book in Tamil on the hypocrisy of BJP leader and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Congress Party' Rahul Gandhi in 2023. Reader who can read Tamil may be interested in that book.

பாரதிய சனதா கட்சியும் தமிழும்: நரேந்திர மோடியின் திடீர் தமிழ்ப் பாசம் - பத்மா நாராயணசாமி

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and Tamil: Narendra Modi's Sudden Love for Tamil (Tamil Book) - Padma Narayanasamy

<https://archive.org/details/tamil-book-bjp-modi-tamil-hindi-sanskrit>

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Dark Clouds over Tamil Nadu (Cauvery Water, NEET, Jallikattu, Navodaya Schools and Fishermen Shootings)

The Two Golden Ages of Tamil Nadu and the Current Dark Days

Lighter Side of Life and Politics in Tamil Nadu

Books in Tamil

தமிழ்நாட்டின் இரு பொற்காலங்களும், இன்றைய இருள் காலமும் (வரலாறு) - தஞ்சை நலங்கிள்ளி

The Two Golden Ages of Tamil Nadu and the Current Dark Days (History) (Tamil book) by Thanjai Nalankilli

தமிழ்நாடு இந்தி எதிர்ப்புப் போராட்டங்களும், தீக்குளிப்புகளும் - தஞ்சை நலங்கிள்ளி
Tamil Nadu Anti-Hindi Agitations and Self-Immolations (Tamil book) by Thanjai Nalankilli

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